

Authoritative and participative leadership styles

[Business](#)



Their Pros and Cons Leadership style is the approach that a leader takes in giving direction, implementing plans and motivating employees. There are three main styles of leadership that are known. These include authoritarian or autocratic, participative or democratic, and delegative styles of leadership. A good leader uses a blend of all the three styles of leadership, depending on the forces implicated between the leader, the followers and the circumstances (Philip, 2003). Authoritative style, for instance, can be used on a new staff member who is in the process of learning the job.

The leader should act as a good instructor and should demonstrate competency in all the undertakings. When the employees learn new skills, they get motivated. The participative style, on the other hand, can be used with a team of workers who are well aware of their work. Here, the leader is partly knowledgeable about the problem, but needs more information. The employees, on the contrary, know their work and are willing to be part of the decision making team (Philip, 2003). Delegative style is most applicable when dealing with a worker who knows more about the job than the leader.

It is actualized by the fact that the leader cannot do everything, and the employee is willing to take ownership of her work. In this essay, we will compare advantages and disadvantages of the first two styles of leadership enlisted above. Participative leadership is a style of management that allows employee to give input on all the decisions that a company makes. The staff is granted the information, which entails all the company's issues. After careful deliberation, a vote of majority is used to determine the action that the company takes (Cliff & John, 2010). Participative leadership, at times, is a very slow form of making decisions.

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Nonetheless, it has many advantages which make the managerial style of choice for many businesses and companies (Cliff et al, 2010). Participative leadership fosters acceptance. The staff usually is more ready to accept decisions and policies arrived at by consensus. This limits the opposition that new policies may experience. It also accelerates the process of implementation of new ideas. It gives the employees a personal ownership in the fulfillment of the new company policies.

This is because they are involved in the entire policy making process, from creation to approval. This helps the company make rapid adjustments to changes in policy. Participative leadership boosts the morale of employees. When employees are given chance to express their views on company's operations, they hold themselves accountable for the success of the company (Talha, 2011). The chance given to the employees to be part of the company decision making process keeps their morale high. When employees know that they are able to directly affect the policies governing their company, they become more active in their roles in improving the working conditions (Cliff et al, 2010).

Participative leadership fosters creativity in the company. When employees are encouraged to air their opinions on the issues of the company, a variety of solutions is often found (Thelma, 2008). The staff must be closely involved in the manner of the company's operations to participate in the decision making process. Participative leadership gives employees the power to apply their creativity in developing more productive work processes and enhancing the efficiency of the company. A participative style of leadership gives the staff much more than just the chance to have their salaries improved

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through better performance. It gives the employees the opportunity to play an active role in determining the success of the company in the future.

When employees are given the chance to be actively involved in the growth of the company, it encourages them to stay with this corporation and see the success of their plans. This improves the retention of employees. It also cuts down the costs of turnover (Thelma, 2008). There are, however, many shortfalls associated with participative leadership style. It takes more time to make a decision and it becomes less effective when unskilled labor is involved. Moreover, when it comes to information sharing, there are many dangers.

Participative leadership is time-intensive. It takes a lot of time to get a solution to a problem. When deliberating upon a problem and making possible strategies, the group of employees involved must have structures and the necessary guidance (Talha, 2011). This can help them be more efficient with time when arriving at a decision. Even though such structures like the decision tree and the time-driven decision tree exist, time efficiency remains a challenge. For instance, when there are only four strategies to choose from, the employees must still come to an agreement of the best strategy to be taken up.

When there is a constraint of time or an urgent deadline, it becomes unrealistic to employ this style of leadership. Participative leadership does not work at every kind of workplace environment. For instance, a company that has a very large workforce can have enormous challenges when they opt for this style to arrive at a decision. Moreover, a big percentage of the

unskilled workers may greatly hinder the business decisions (Nancy, 2009). Some employees also do not have group skills. It, therefore, becomes complicated for them to be heard in the participative process.

Thus, this leadership style's success becomes limited to small number of highly skilled employees who can give informed input to the management. It may be difficult for managers to give every employee very sensitive business information. The information might be crucial in the assessment of the proper strategy, but then it would not be wise for every staff member to have its knowledge. In participative leadership, information can be shared without giving much thought to its sensitivity. This may lead to information leak and even a possible conflict among the employees (Philip, 2003).

Authoritarian leadership takes a top-down approach. The leader makes the final decision and the employees, who are his juniors or subordinates, implement the decision without any participation in the process of making it (Cliff et al, 2010). Many employees often find it difficult to cope with this style of leadership, while others need this very style in order do their best. There are some advantages and disadvantages in using this leadership style within an organization. Authoritative leadership is best suited in situations, which call for very quick ddecision making. Such decisions call for precision and expertise in that particular area in order to make a choice for the good of the company or organization and its employees.

In urgent, for instance, military circumstances, people do prefer to be told what to do next. Autocratic style of leadership has been found to very effective in such stressful situations. It eradicates lengthy debates and limits

unnecessary arguments (Talha, 2011). It allows the employees to focus on their core task, which is to work. This may mean that the employees can master their duties, improve their proficiency and, therefore, support the development of the company.

In situations in which the employees are new and lack experience in their jobs, authoritarian style of leadership is best applicable. In places where the employee population is very big and deliberating with them over an issue can take a very long time, this style of leadership assures result. It is also very effective when there is need for precise directions. When time constrains and urgent deadlines are supposed to be met, this kind of leadership becomes the most appropriate. Moreover, in situations where employees challenge the leader's authority and when a leader finds that a business or department has been mismanaged prior to his appointment, this style of leadership remains the most preferable.

Apart from this, when there is need to regularly harmonize tasks with other departments, it is often advisable to employ authoritarian leadership (Cliff et al, 2010). This type of leadership necessitates the presence of the leader or the instructions given by the leader at all times. It gives no room for creativity or second thoughts. The employees are not allowed to ask questions, but strictly follow the laid-down instructions. Basic assignments become the only way through which their performance can be challenged.

Since all assignments are given direction and instruction, this leadership style makes communication minimal because the employees have the knowledge of what they ought to achieve (Thelma, 2008). There are many

disadvantages associated with authoritative leadership. It has been linked with alienation and animosity among employees (Thelma, 2008). It also lowers the morale of the employees and reduces their commitment and devotion. There is never a laid-down process for making joint decisions and solving problems (Thelma, 2008). The expertise of the employee is simply ignored, and this leads to lack of respect and consideration (Cliff et al, 2010).

It is the task of the leader to study keenly the pros and cons of these two styles of leadership. This helps in choosing the best style for a situation or a particular job description. This autocratic approach gives neither recognition to employees nor space to allow them grow and even become partners. Additionally, it throws away the chance to utilize and share the expertise and experience present in the different levels of the company. This retards the overall growth of the company and the workers' individual improvement since sharing leads to sharpening of skills (Nancy, 2009). The decisions, the power and the planning are all concentrated on top leaders.

Whenever there is a job that needs technical skills, they cannot be delegated to the employees (Philip, 2003).